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MY FRIEND AND I.

FRITZ.

LAURA DAYTON EAKIN.

Fritz was counted the smartest little dog in Millbank. There was a tradition that he had once belonged to a troupe of performing dogs in a circus. All that was certainly known of him, however, was this fact: A tramp sold him to Greta's father, over a year ago, for half a dollar. He could stand on his hind legs and beg, "speak" for a bit of bread, carry a basket, jump over a cane, and do many other wonderful tricks. All the children in town were fond of him, but Greta loved him best. She had no brothers and sisters, and since her father's death, her mother was always busy; but, with Fritz as a companion, she was seldom lonely.

Alice and Grace Sedgwick lived in the handsomest house in Millbank. Greta used to envy them, as they rode by on their white ponies. They had everything they wanted, she was sure, while she—she had only Fritz. She had made a mistake, though. Alice and Grace wanted Greta's "cunning little doggie."

One day a servant, who looked very grand in his livery to Greta, came and offered her mamma five dollars for Fritz; but when Greta cried bitterly at the mere mention of parting with her favorite, the man was told to say that the dog was not for sale. Times were hard that winter, and every new want in the household seemed to heap reproaches on the child. Five dollars was a fortune in her eyes; and one day, when the wood was low and there was little food in the house, she could bear it no longer, and slipped away with Fritz to the Sedgwick residence.

"I have brought Fritz to you," she said, when Grace and Alice came running to meet her. "We need the money so much." There was a sob in her throat, and she threw her arms around the dog's neck to bid him good-bye.

Mrs. Sedgwick was touched by her grief, and when she reached home her mamma found a crisp, new ten dollar bill.

It was a long time, though, before Greta ceased to miss her pet.

ELMA'S REVENGE.

A NEW YEAR'S STORY.

Two girls stood before a picture-dealer's window one wintry afternoon, looking at a neatly-framed engraving of Meyer's "Holy Family."

"It's just what she would like," said the elder of the two. "I've heard her say it was the sweetest face—the Infant Jesus there—that she ever saw in a picture. And it's only ten dollars, Elma. That's little enough for ten girls to raise."

"Especially for a teacher that we all love so dearly," assented Elma. "But the trouble with me is that I haven't a cent left of my allowance. After Christmas, you know, is the most poverty-stricken time of all the year. It's a great pity her birthday should come on New Year's eve, Bertha."

"So it is," said Bertha; "but she couldn't help that, you see. I'm penniless myself; but for once in my life I'm going to earn a dollar. Aunt Fanny wants a lot of napkins hemmed with invisible stitches, and I've taken the contract. Can't you and Helen do something of the same sort? The other girls have all subscribed, and you won't want to be left out, of course."

"Of course not. We'll have to manage it somehow."

"There are four days yet," said Bertha, "before the money need be paid. Mr. Snedecor has promised to keep the picture for us."

"Well, one ought to be able to earn a dollar in four days," returned Elma, cheerfully. "I guess you can depend upon us."

But as she walked home in the darkening afternoon, she could not help feeling that it was rather an uncertain dependence, after all. Aunt Hannah, who was guardian for her cousin Helen and herself—both orphans—had rigid notions about money matters. The girls had a regular allowance, paid quarterly, not monthly. It was Aunt Hanna's idea of teaching them to be careful, and to provide for the future; but who can think of the future when Christmas is at hand, and you have your quarterly allowance in a lump? Helen and Elma had certainly spent theirs in a rather reckless fashion, and Aunt Hannah had not interfered. She only said, significantly:

"Remember that you will have no more till February."

It would be quite useless to ask her for an advance, Elma was convinced. And Helen agreed with her when they discussed the matter together.

"No; we'll have to depend upon ourselves," said Elma, thoughtfully; "and there are only two ways I can think of to raise the money."

"Two? Well, that's one more than enough!" cried Helen. "That's encouraging, Elma."

"They're not very pleasant ways, either of them," said Elma, slowly. "One is to knit that rug for Miss Rebecca——"

"Oh, horrors!" interrupted Helen. "Count me out of that, if you please."

"I thought you'd say so; and perhaps you can suggest something better."

"Not I. But you said you had two ideas. What's the other one?"

"The other one I think I shall decide upon for myself. It won't help you, Helen; for I don't suppose Mrs. Spencer will care about spending more than a dollar for plants. She was looking at my white oxalis the other day, and the pink begonia; and, from the way she talked, I think she would buy them if I offered them to her. I don't exactly like to do it, of course——"

"Don't you?" interrupted Helen, her eyes sparkling. "That settles it then, Elma; for I don't mind it in the least. I've got a begonia myself, and a rose-geranium that's worth two of your oxalis. I'll take them right over."

"But that isn't fair, Helen," exclaimed Elma, indignantly. "You never thought of it yourself, and you've no right to take my idea."

"Why not? You said you didn't want to sell your plants; so that left it open for me to sell mine. And I'm going to do it immediately. You can knit Miss Rebecca's rug."

She ran out of the room before Elma could say anything more; and the next minute a rattling of flower-pots was heard in the dining-room, that proved the reality of her intention. Elma jumped up with a passionate impulse.

"This is too bad. I won't submit to it. I'll go and tell Aunt Hannah," she said to herself, fiercely. And she started towards the door; but as she caught sight of her own face in a mirror close by, she stopped suddenly. Her eyes were flashing with anger, her face scarlet, and her hands clinched in rage. It made a picture that was oddly in contrast with that of the sweet Virgin mother, and the heavenly child in her arms. And Elma's heart was smitten with sudden shame as she remembered the dear teacher for whose birthday the picture was to be bought.

"What would Miss Maurice say if she could see me?" she thought, remorsefully. And then came a memory of a day, not long since, when Miss Maurice had talked with her so tenderly and so earnestly, that she had promised to follow her Saviour's example, and come to him in holy baptism. She had thought herself ready for this; that she had repented of her sins, and been forgiven; but now her heart was hot with rage, and full of all uncharitableness. How could she dare to call herself a child of Christ?

Helen went across the street with her flower-pots, undisturbed, much to her own surprise; for she had hardly expected that Elma would submit so easily to such an injustice. She felt triumphant when she reached Mrs. Spencer's house without being called back by her Aunt Hannah, as she had half expected to be. But her triumph was short-lived; for, alas! Mrs. Spencer did not want the plants, after all. If she had only known a little earlier that Miss Helen wanted to dispose of them, she would have been most happy. But, as it was, she had just been to the florist's and ordered all she needed She had really not room in her windows for another flower-pot!

Helen came home with crest-fallen looks; and if Elma had wanted revenge, she could have had it to her heart's content in her cousin's mortification. But Elma said nothing. The revenge she wanted was of another sort; and Helen wondered and was ashamed at the friendly way in which Elma behaved, day by day. She had set herself to work diligently upon the rug, which Miss Rebecca—one of Aunt Hannah's old friends—had some time ago wished the girls to knit. It was made of woolen rags, which had to be cut in little strips, and the different colors worked in together in a certain harmony of design. Miss Rebecca had begun it herself; but her eyesight was poor, and she was obliged to stop half-way in her task. Yet she wanted the rug finished, and Elma—for her teacher's sake—determined to do it.

There were four days of tiresome work for her. Her back ached, and her fingers grew sore; but she kept up her courage with a sweet purpose, and many an earnest inward prayer. She knew that Miss Rebecca would pay her more than a dollar for the work. Possibly it would be two—she hoped it would be two! But lo, and behold, when the rug was done so much earlier than she had expected, and so entirely to her satisfaction, Miss Rebecca's heart grew liberal; and not two, but three silver dollars were put into Elma's eager hands.

She went home with winged feet, and ordered Helen to put on her hat and cloak, and go over to Bertha's house with her. And when Helen stared in sullen wonder, one of the dollars was pushed softly into her hands, with two silver quarters besides; and Elma's arms went round her neck, and a kiss of love and forgiveness was pressed upon Helen's shame-dyed cheek. There was no need to explain. Helen understood, and you will not wonder that she hid her face on her cousin's shoulder, and sobbed, and declared she would not take the money; for she did not deserve it.

Which was quite true, indeed; but, nevertheless, she did take the money; and the two girls were soon on their way to Bertha's house, where they had been anxiously expected, and were heartily welcomed; for their two dollars were very necessary to the purchase of the birthday gift, and there was no time to lose.

I would like to describe to you Miss Maurice's pleasure in receiving the lovely picture next day; and to tell you about the old-fashioned tea-party to which all ten girls were invited afterwards, and what a merry time they had. But my story is too long for anything more than a word or two about Helen.

She was not so bad a girl as perhaps you imagined from her readiness to do a selfish thing. She had a conscience, after all, and a heart that was stirred by her cousin's kindness. If Elma had treated her so badly, she knew that she would have resented it, and revenged herself in a different way. And, pondering over the matter, she came to the wise conclusion to follow Elma's example, and gain for herself the strength which would help her to overcome evil with good.

That strength is within reach of us all. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all liberally." May his blessing rest upon us this happy New Year's Day!

"GOD GIVE—I GIVE."

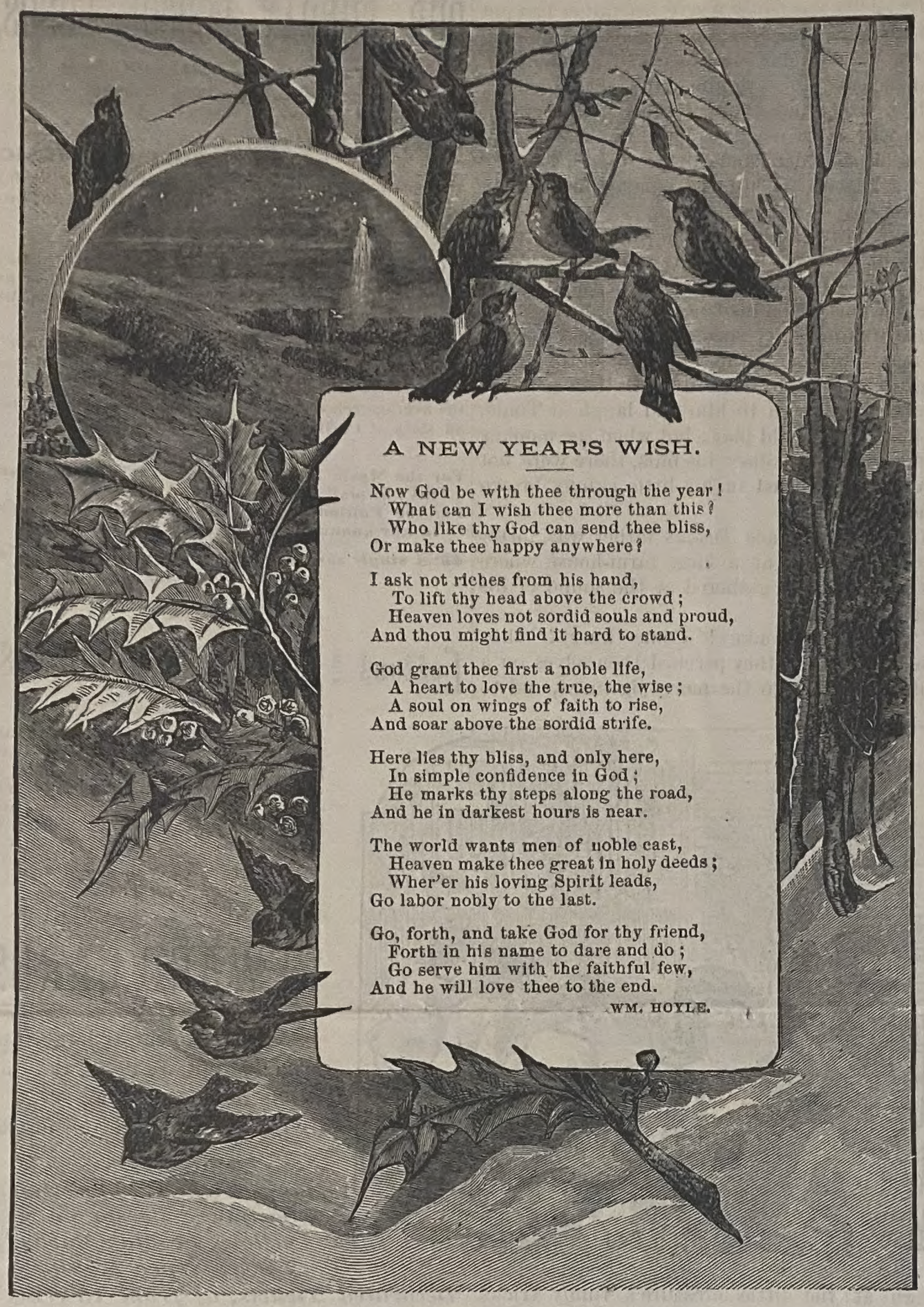
There is a very touching story of a poor little boy, who, when suffering from cold and hunger, was warmed and fed through a kind friend "sent by God," as he truly told the child. When the little fellow was warm, he thought of some other children as poor as himself, and wanted to carry them some of the wood God sent. "Because," said he, "God give—I give."

That is just the reason why we should give. This poor little boy who had been at a Mission Sunday-school two or three times, and heard the story of God's great gift to the world, had learned the secret of real giving. He would pass on to others God's good gift to him. That was real love and gratitude.

Perhaps some one says: "What can I give?" Like everything else, giving should be thought about, prayed about, and planned for. Perhaps you can earn money to give to Christ's cause by doing some self-denying work, or going without something you want very much. If you begin to look out for a way to give, you will certainly find it! Be sure of that.

Think about this, boys and girls, and when you think of it, repeat the words of the poor child: "God give—I give."

SIN is a very simple word, but it is a very awful thing. A little child could spell the word, but no one, not even the angels that dwell in heaven, could explain the thing, or tell the great evils it has wrought. It is a deadly tree, whose fruit and whose shadows have filled the world, and from which everybody has suffered.



A NEW YEAR'S WISH.

Now God be with thee through the year!
What can I wish thee more than this?
Who like thy God can send thee bliss,
Or make thee happy anywhere?

I ask not riches from his hand,
To lift thy head above the crowd;
Heaven loves not sordid souls and proud,
And thou might find it hard to stand.

God grant thee first a noble life,
A heart to love the true, the wise;
A soul on wings of faith to rise,
And soar above the sordid strife.

Here lies thy bliss, and only here,
In simple confidence in God;
He marks thy steps along the road,
And he in darkest hours is near.

The world wants men of noble cast,
Heaven make thee great in holy deeds;
Wher'er his loving Spirit leads,
Go labor nobly to the last.

Go, forth, and take God for thy friend,
Forth in his name to dare and do;
Go serve him with the faithful few,
And he will love thee to the end.

WM. HOYLE.

ON THE ICE.

Snow! Snow! Snow! All through the night it had been snowing fast. While the children were sound asleep, cuddled under the blankets, the old woman had been busy plucking her geese; and silently but swiftly the tiny white flakes had come tumbling down, till, when morning dawned, gardens and fields and lanes were all covered with a glittering white carpet. What shouts of delight there were as the children woke, and had to rub Jack Frost's pretty lace curtains off the windows before they could get a peep at the snow!

Already Milly Hearn was diligently sweeping away the footprints her father had left as he went to work. The pathway was almost finished, when down came her brother—curly-headed Tom—his eyes sparkling with delight as he plunged at once into the snow.

"Come along, Milly; down with the broom. Here goes!" And almost before she could bend her head, whiz came a snowball, and left its mark on the cottage door.

"Wait till I've finished, Tom," cried Milly. Another snowball was the only answer.

This was too provoking, and Tom soon felt the snowy ends of the broom close to his rosy cheek. Then the battle began in real earnest; and father, coming home to breakfast, found them both with cheeks all aglow; but the path was nowhere to be seen.

"You have spoilt all my work," exclaimed Milly.

But with a few swift strokes, Tom soon sent the snow flying on either side.

"Won't we have some jolly sliding after school?" cried the boy, as he quickly disposed of his basin of porridge.

"Not where you might make it dangerous for any one to walk, I hope."

"Oh, no, mother! I don't want to break the old women's legs," laughed Tom. "Down by the pond is the place for me."

"Don't try the ice to-day, my boy. It can't be strong enough yet," said his father.

"I hope it will freeze hard to-night, then there'll be skating to-morrow." And Tom's eyes sparkled afresh.

"Remember, Tom, not on the ice to-day." was his father's last warning as he went off to work.

The short December day was fast drawing to a close, but the boys could still see to slide. You might tell where they were by the shouting round the pond. Slide after slide—some long, some short—had been made near the pond; and now a long string of boys, with Tom in the midst, was gliding swiftly across the sloping bank. On they went, heedless that they had left the land, and were now on the snow-covered ice. Tom's shouts were loudest of all, till, suddenly, his foot caught, and he fell heavily, not on the ground, but on the thin ice, which cracked and shivered with his weight, and plunged him in the freezing water.

Tom knew nothing more until he opened his eyes to find himself in his own little room at home, with his mother and Milly rubbing his cold hands. He could not make it out at first; but gradually recollection came back, and he shivered as he seemed to feel the cold waters closing over him once more. "How did I get here?" he asked, faintly.

"Father brought you," said Milly. "He was coming home just as it happened, and the boys shouted to him. But it was very difficult to get you out, because the ice was so thin, and he might have fallen in too."

Then in came the father, having changed his dripping clothes. "Is he coming round, mother?" he asked.

"Father," whispered Tom, eagerly, "I didn't know I was on the ice."

"Never mind about that now, Tom."

"But I don't want you to think I disobeyed you, father."

But his father would not let him say anything more for a long time. At last Tom told him that he had never meant to go on the pond; but the ice, covered with snow, looked so much like the bank, and the slides went so near, that when he was sliding he did not notice when he had got off the land.

"But why did you go so near, my boy? There was plenty of room farther away."

"I thought there was no harm as long as I was not on the ice," said Tom.

"Ah! that is what men say when they take a glass or two of beer—there is no harm as long as they don't get drunk. But should you think there was no danger, Tom, if you went close to the mouth of the lion's den, when you knew that he was inside, even if you did not go right in?"

"Yes, father, I should keep as far away as I possibly could."

"Then never think there is no harm in going near to wrong-doing, Tom. There is very great harm. Keep right away from it, or you may never know when you get to it."

I think that was a lesson Tom did not soon forget.

"LITTLE ME-TOO."

One night Aunt Mary was singing baby to sleep in a room near to that in which our little baby lay. Presently baby's brother Johnnie shouted at the top of his voice: "Me-too, auntie! me too! One for me, too!"

From that day for a long, long time, he was called, "Little Me-too."

One day he was building just the loveliest block-house, so tall, so large, so nice, and had not the least idea that it was a quarter to seven o'clock—almost his bed-time.

"Come, dear," said mamma, "it is time to put away the blocks and get ready for bed."

"Oh, mamma," begged the little fellow, "let me stay a little longer—just till the clock strikes again."

Mamma glanced at it, and saw that the minute hand was creeping nearer and nearer, and knew well her little boy had no idea of the time. So she said, "If you will stop cheerfully when the clock strikes, I will let you play on."

It seemed only a minute to our busy boy when the silvery bell rang out over the mantel; and he looked up in great surprise, then shut his lips tight for a moment, took a long breath, and said sadly, but submissively: "I didn't think it would strike so soon; but I must keep my truth."

PHILADELPHIA, JANUARY 1, 1888.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

How lightly the words are said, and yet how much they mean! How few stop to ask what kind of happiness they desire for themselves, or for their friends! No doubt, there is a general desire in the hearts of all for success in the world, for comfort at home. And this is right enough, as far as it goes. But how far is that? Only to the end of the year, if our lives are spared; and so to another year, and another, while life goes on. And then—what then? There will come a last year; and all worldly happiness will be over. A new world and a new life will open before us; but who will say to us, as we go down into the valley of death, "A Happy New Year!" Let us give a moment to this thought. Will this be a Happy New Year for us, if it should carry us to the shores of eternity? Happiness in the next world, that is what we should endeavor to attain. And it is within the power of every-one to make sure of entering that new life with joy.

No one can make sure that he will prosper in this world, or will enjoy good health. But he can make sure of a happy eternity. The Psalmist says, "Thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek thee." Precious and beautiful words; but not more beautiful than true. A holy life is the only way to a happy eternity—a life of thankful trust in Jesus Christ; a life of earnest striving against all sin by the help of the Holy Spirit, a life of simple walking in the ways of God, seeking to do his will on earth as it is done in heaven, and all the while doing our work heartily and enjoying thankfully the pleasures that God gives us. This is the way to ensure a Happy New Year and to prepare for a happy hereafter. And it is in this sense that I wish you all a Happy New Year.

THE ORGAN-GRINDER'S CHILD.

MRS. R. N. HILL.

"Oh, father, I am so sick this morning! My head burns so, and I ache all over. Stay with me to-day, father; don't leave me all alone!"

It was the organ-grinder's little daughter who was speaking in that pleading tone, and her great sorrowful black eyes were full of beseeching also. Her father threw up his hands and shook his head in distress.

"But I must, my poor, little Tessa! I must go and seek money, else how can I get thee food to eat, or medicine to make thee well? The long sickness has eaten up all; the pouch is empty—see!"

He held his leathern purse upside down, but not a penny rolled out; and poor little Tessa heaved a sigh and laid herself back again upon her hard bed. She knew that money meant life, and must be earned; but oh, how long and dreary were those days of pain, all alone in the little empty out-house where her father had got permission for her to stay, when the tramping in the hot sun, day after day, had made her ill, and she could go with him and Tonie no longer.

Her father put a bit of bread and a cup of milk within her reach, strapped the heavy organ upon his shoulders, and called, "Come, Tonie!" to the little wizened-faced monkey in his dirty scarlet coat.

"Good-bye, little one," he said, sorrowfully. "I will be back by sunset. Say thy prayers, and the good God will take care of thee." And then he was off on his long day's tramp.

He was not very successful; there were not so many children in the country as in town, and they did not part so readily with their pennies. They would listen to him and laugh at Tonie, as long as he would play; but when the monkey came round to collect his bills, there were not many coins placed in his little skinny brown claws.

Only at one place Tessa's father was fortunate. This was at a large farm-house where several boys had gathered at the sound of his organ.

"He's got a monkey! Come—hurry!" they cried; and then they perched themselves on a railing to listen to the merry jig-tunes, and to

laugh at the little creature's funny tricks. Hearing the noise, a pet-goat, belonging to one of the lads, came trotting up also, and angry in a minute at the sight of the other animal, he put down his head and rushed furiously at poor Tonie, butting with his sharp, crooked horns. Tonie fled in terror, and the boys shouted so loud that the farmer came out too to share in the fun.

"I haven't laughed so much in a month," he said to Tonie's master. "Here's a quarter to pay for it, and if you go round to the kitchen they'll give you some dinner."

The organ-grinder bowed low. "Because that ugly brute frightened poor Tonie!" he thought, bitterly; but he was glad of the money and of the dinner, for now he could go back to his little daughter, lying ill and alone.

But when he drew near the hut, he heard Tessa's voice and another voice answering, and as he opened the door, a sweet-faced little girl rose from her seat on the edge of Tessa's pallet.

"She heard me crying, and she came in," said Tessa, her black eyes beaming with gratefulness. "And she brought me soup and oranges full of juice; and the good mother brought something to cool my head; and they will come again every day, father, till I am well!"

The poor father's eyes filled, and he bowed low to the little lady.

"Did I not tell thee to pray to the good God, and he would care for thee?" he said.

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